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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ UNOSOM, supported by seven-nation task force, completes withdrawal from Somalia ahead of schedule and without incident.

+ Under-Secretary-General Peter Hansen says United Nations will not cut off Somalia's life-support; agencies and relief groups to continue operations.

+ Security Council mission to Burundi reports situation in country potentially explosive; recommends strengthened United Nations presence to help build government institutions.

+ On final day in Vienna, Secretary-General meets with President of Austrian National Council.

+ Secretary-General considers minimum conditions exist for continuation of United Nations involvement in Guatemala peace negotiations.

+ Heads of State and government will meet in Copenhagen for World Summit for Social Development; will tackle issues of poverty, unemployment and social disintegration.

+ Angolan Government accuses UNITA of undermining peace process by provocative actions; threatens retaliation.

+ Heads of five United Nations agencies meet in Rome to plan better strategies for combining relief and development operations in Africa.

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The withdrawal of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM), assisted by a seven-nation combined task force, has been carried out in a safe and orderly manner, ahead of schedule and virtually without a hitch, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. UNOSOM's complete withdrawal marked the end of a major phase of the international community's efforts to facilitate the search for peace and to bring humanitarian assistance to the country.

(more)

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The Secretary-General said United Nations involvement in Somalia would continue. He stressed that international assistance, both in the political and humanitarian areas, would depend on the cooperation extended to the United Nations and humanitarian agencies by Somali's leaders, available resources, and the security situation in the country. He hoped that the Somali people would find the courage and wisdom to achieve political reconciliation and to bring peace to their country.

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The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Peter Hansen, said Friday that the United Nations was not switching off Somalia's life support. Mr. Hansen told correspondents that United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organizations were staying in the country. International agency staff had been temporarily withdrawn from Mogadishu and redeployed to other parts of Somalia and to Nairobi. About 50 international staff members from various United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations were still managing operations in 14 regions of the country.

Mr. Hansen said the international staff would work in those areas where security had been established. Members of the United Nations Coordination Team were combining their resources and making arrangements to ensure that they would have the transportation, communications and evacuation facilities necessary to maximize their security and mobility. He stressed that Somali cooperation and donor support were necessary. However, less than 10 per cent of the $70 million requested for the January-June 1995 consolidated inter-agency appeal had been received.

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The seven-member Security Council mission to Burundi has described the political situation in the country as precarious and potentially explosive. In a report to the Council, dated 28 February, the mission said extremist Tutsi and Hutu elements within and outside the Government had not accepted power-sharing arrangements contained in the Convention of Government agreement signed last September. Moderates who formed the majority had been silenced through intimidation and threats, and the judicial system had largely collapsed. As a result, the survival of the coalition government, as well as peace and security in Burundi and the region, was threatened.

The mission has recommended that the United Nations presence in Burundi be strengthened to help build an impartial judicial system, train civilian police and establish effective administration in the provinces. The mission also recommended that the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights deploy monitors throughout the country. The number of observers from the Organization of African Unity (OAU) should be increased from 46 and restrictions on their movement lifted.

An international commission of inquiry into the October 1993 coup attempt and massacre which followed should be set up as soon as possible, the report said. Some members of the mission believed the Council should explore the

imposition of sanctions, such as the denial of entry visas and freezing of foreign accounts, against individuals suspected of belonging to extremist groups in Burundi, while other members believed selective sanctions could be counterproductive.

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Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali continued his official visit to Austria Friday, meeting with the former Mayor of Vienna, Helmut Zelik. The Secretary-General then went to the Austrian Parliament, where he met with the President of the Austrian National Council, Heinz Fischer, and stressed the crucial role which Parliament could play in support of the United Nations. The President stated that Austrian Parliament would be represented at the United Nations fiftieth anniversary conference organized this summer in New York. The two men also discussed the situation in the former Yugoslavia, security problems in Europe and reform of United Nations institutions.

The Secretary-General also went to the Vienna International Centre, where he met with the staff of the United Nations agencies and programmes based in the city. Later, he met with Thorvald Stoltenberg, Co-Chairman of the Steering Committee for the International Conference on the former Yugoslavia. The Secretary-General will leave for Copenhagen on Saturday, where he will attend the World Summit for Social Development.

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More than 120 heads of State and government are expected to attend the World Summit for Social Development, which begins Monday in Copenhagen. The Summit will be the first ever meeting at the highest government level with the express objective of confronting poverty, unemployment and social disintegration. Ambassador Juan Somavia of Chile, the Chairman of the Summit's Preparatory Committee, said a number of proposals had been developed into a unique global accord to enhance social development.

Mr. Somavia said the document concentrated on the needs and rights of countries and people who were experiencing the greatest hardships, while also addressing major economic and social problems in wealthier countries.

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The Secretary-General considers that the minimum conditions exist for the continuation of United Nations involvement in the Guatemalan peace negotiations, according to a spokesman for the Organization. The Secretary-General has received positive replies from the President of Guatemala and the leadership of the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) to written proposals by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Marrack Goulding.

The Secretary-General said he expects both sides to make good on their commitment to give new impetus to the negotiations and to finalize an agreement on indigenous rights as soon as possible. Rapid progress on the

issue would strengthen the credibility of the negotiations. It would also increase support for the Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights (MINUGUA), which has been fully deployed in Guatemala since 1 March.

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The Angolan Government has accused the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) of undermining the peace agreement by provocative actions, and has warned of retaliation. A United Nations spokesman said Friday that diplomatic efforts were under way in Luanda to resolve the problem. Tensions had been reduced somewhat in the last 48 hours.

The Security Council approved on 8 February the third phase of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III), by which 7,000 troops were deployed to the country to assist with the peace process.

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Heads of five United Nations agencies, which provide 80 per cent of total United Nations development assistance, met in Rome Friday to plan better strategies for combining relief and development operations in Africa. The high-level meeting is being held at a time of increasingly complex emergencies in the continent, which threaten the lives of millions of people.

The agency heads will discuss collaborative ways to cope with refugees and displaced people, and how to integrate operational priorities from the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo. They will also discuss methods for fostering self-sufficiency among disaster-prone nations and how to programme risk potential into investments in long-term development.

The agencies involved include the World Food Programme; the United Nations Development Programme; the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; the United Nations Children's Fund; the United Nations Population Fund; and the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

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